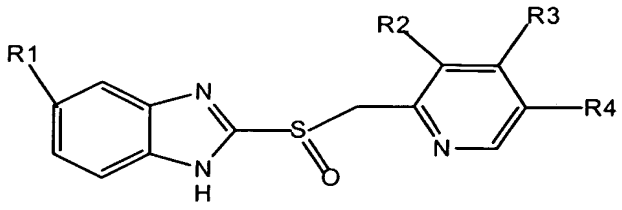
3. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein the inert, non-alkaline coating and the system of modified release are mixed in a single layer.

4. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25, in which said one or more intermediate layers (c) comprise a mixture of one or more layers of inert, non-alkaline coating, and one or more layers of said system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water, and one or more layers of a mixture of inert, non-alkaline coating, and said system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water.

5. (Currently Amended A pellet according to claim 25, wherein the inert, non-alkaline coating, formed of an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients is disposed over the layer (b), wherein the layer [[(b)]] comprises the system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water which is disposed over the layer of the inert, non-alkaline coating; and the layer (d) is disposed over the layer formed by the system of modified release comprising an inert non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water.

6. (Currently Amended) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is a compound of formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is hydrogen methoxy or difluoromethoxy;
R^2 is methyl or methoxy;
R^3 is methoxy, ~~2,2,2-trifluoromethoxy~~ 2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy or 3-methoxypropoxy; and
R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

7. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is selected from the group consisting of omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole and mixtures thereof.

8. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, present in the layer (b) is selected from hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC) and hydroxypropylcellulose (HPC).

9. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25, wherein said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water of the inert, non-alkaline coating, present in the intermediate layer(s) (c) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

10. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water of the system of modified release, present in the one or more intermediate layers (c) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

11. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said inert polymer insoluble in water of the system of modified release, present in the one or more intermediate layers (c) is ethylcellulose or a copolymer of ammonium methacrylate.

12. (Previously Presented) A pellet according to claim 25 wherein said external layer (d) comprises a gastro-resistant polymer, a plasticizer and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients.

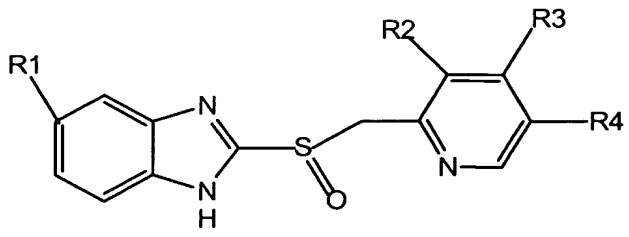
13. (Previously Presented) A method for obtaining a gastro-resistant pellet of modified release that contains as an active ingredient an acid labile benzimidazole compound, that comprises:

(i) applying an aqueous suspension of an acid labile benzimidazole compound, an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients to cover an inert nucleus;

(ii) applying one or more intermediate layers, separated or mixed among themselves that contain (i) an inert, non-alkaline coating, formed of an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients; and (ii) a system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water, a plasticizer and an anti-tack agent, separate or mixed; and

(iii) covering said intermediate layer or layers with an aqueous suspension that comprises a gastro-resistant polymer, a plasticizer and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients to create an external layer of enteric coating.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is a compound of formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is hydrogen, methoxy or difluoromethoxy;

R^2 is methyl or methoxy;

R^3 is methoxy, 2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy or 3-methoxypropoxy; and

R^4 is hydrogen or methyl.

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein said acid labile benzimidazole compound is selected from the group consisting of omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole and mixtures thereof.

16. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13, wherein, said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, present in the suspension applied in step (i) is selected from hydroxypropyl-methylcellulose (HPMC) and hydroxypropylcellulose (HPC).

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13, wherein, said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, comprised in the inert, non-alkaline coating, present in the suspension applied in step (ii) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13, wherein, said inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water, comprised in the system of modified release, present in the suspension applied in step (ii) is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (HPMC).

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 13 wherein said inert polymer insoluble in water, comprised in the system of modified release, present in the suspension applied in step (ii) is ethylcellulose or a copolymer of ammonium methacrylate.

20. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release that comprises one or more pellets of claim 25.

21. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release comprising a mixture of the pellets of claim 25 having the same release profile.

22. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release comprising a mixture of the pellets of claim 25 having a different release profile.

23. (Previously Presented) A composition of modified release comprising a mixture of the pellets of claim 25 which have (i) a quick release profile and (ii) a slow release profile in a ratio between 10:90 and 90:10 by weight.

24. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 20, in the form of a capsule or a tablet.

25. (Previously Presented) A pellet comprising an acid labile benzimidazole compound, wherein the pellet comprises:

(a) an inert nucleus;

(b) a layer disposed over said inert nucleus (a), consisting of an acid labile benzimidazole compound, an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients;

(c) one or more intermediate layers that comprise:

(i) an inert, non-alkaline coating, formed of an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable inert excipients; and

(ii) a system of modified release that comprises an inert, non-alkaline polymer soluble in water and an inert polymer insoluble in water; said intermediate layer(s) (c) disposed over said layer (b) that covers the inert nucleus; and

(d) an external layer comprising an enteric coating disposed over

said intermediate layer(s) (c).